



Committee on Homeland Security **Democrats**

Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

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CONGRESSMAN THOMPSON RESPONDS TO AGROTERROR REPORT: TOO MUCH RED TAPE IS ENDANGERING OUR FOOD SUPPLY

Washington, DC — Congressman Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, made the following statement about the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) release of its report on the safety of our food supply:

"The protection of our food supply and those who work hard to support our agricultural base is critical to our society. This report makes it clear that the Administration is wasting time in securing our food from field to fork. It tells us that there is too much "red tape" slowing the government down when officials are deciding to use vaccines to control a catastrophic outbreak such as foot and mouth disease. Without meaningful action, every part of our food supply chain remains a target of opportunity," said Congressman Thompson.

The report, entitled "Homeland Security: Much is Being Done to Protect Agriculture from a Terrorist Attack, but Important Challenges Remain" (GAO-05-214), was requested by Congressman Thompson and Senator Daniel K. Akaka last year to evaluate the government's progress on protecting against agroterrorism. The Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Food and Drug Administration are tasked with jointly working together to develop a plan to keep America's food supply safe.

The GAO report outlines each agency's responsibilities and highlights key challenges that have yet to be addressed by the Administration. Among the issues raised in the report are declining inspections of imported agricultural products, the bureaucratic problems facing the three agencies, the inability to respond quickly to an outbreak, shortage of inspectors at our borders, and inadequate training.

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